

Gellung Warl

Head of Policy – First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria

This is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Designated Position, classified under 'special measures' of section 12 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic). Only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are eligible to apply.

Location: Collingwood, Victoria / hybrid arrangements

Reports to: CEO, Gellung Warl

Team: First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria, Executive Leadership Team

Classification: Executive Level

Salary Range: \$189,991- \$237,177 plus superannuation

Employment Type: Full-time

Employment Status: Fixed term – 5 years

About Gellung Warl

Gellung Warl is a First Peoples’ body established as a statutory corporation under the *Statewide Treaty Act 2025* (Vic). It is comprised of three arms:

- the First Peoples' Assembly, the democratically elected group of Traditional Owners representing and making decisions on behalf of First Peoples in Victoria
- Nginma Ngainga Wara, which will provide independent oversight and accountability of Government on behalf of First Peoples, and
- Nyerna Yoorrook Telkuna, which will continue the Truth-telling and healing process in Victoria.

The First Peoples’ Assembly’s statutory functions include:

- representing First Peoples, including in Statewide Treaty negotiations with the State of Victoria
- making decisions in relation to First Peoples
- advocacy for the interests of First Peoples, including representations to Parliament, State Government and government funded providers
- making internal rules and substantive rules
- making guidelines and standards, and
- engaging in activities relating to capacity building in First Peoples’ communities.

The Members of the First Peoples’ Assembly are elected by First Peoples.

Role Purpose

The Head of Policy is a senior executive responsible for leading the strategic policy, research and analysis functions of the First Peoples’ Assembly and providing authoritative advice to the Chief Executive Officer, elected Members and staff.

The role is central to supporting the organisation in the exercise of its statutory functions, including representing First Peoples, participating in Statewide Treaty negotiations, advocating for the interests of First Peoples,

developing rules, standards and guidelines, making decisions affecting First Peoples, and supporting capacity building across First Peoples communities.

The Head of Policy ensures elected Members have access to high-quality, timely and culturally informed policy advice to support informed and effective governance, decision-making and representation. The role leads the development of policy positions, strategic analysis and evidence-based recommendations on matters of significance to First Peoples in Victoria.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Head of Policy contributes to organisational strategy, governance and performance and works collaboratively across the organisation to advance First Peoples' self-determination and the aspirations of First Peoples communities.

Accountabilities

The Head of Policy is accountable for:

- Leading the development and implementation of the organisation's strategic policy agenda.
- Providing high quality strategic, legislative and policy advice to the CEO and elected Members to support informed decision making in the exercise of statutory functions.
- Leading the development of policy positions, reform proposals, submissions, briefing papers, reports and other strategic advice in accordance with organisational priorities, cultural authority, evidence, legal considerations and best practice.
- Monitoring and analysing emerging legislative, policy, political and social developments and advising on their impact on the organisation.
- Leading the policy engagement with First Peoples' communities, Traditional Owners, community controlled organisations and other stakeholders.
- Supporting the organisation's engagement and other operational functions through the development of policy frameworks, resources and strategic initiatives.
- Leading and overseeing the Policy Team to ensure effective planning, prioritisation, delivery, staff development and alignment with organisational objectives.
- Promoting a high-performance, values-led and culturally safe team environment.
- Contributing to organisational leadership, strategy, planning and performance as a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

Key Selection Criteria

Required

Strategic policy advice and development

- Demonstrated senior leadership experience and tertiary qualifications in public policy, law, public administration, advocacy, governance or a related field.
- Extensive experience providing high quality strategic advice to executive leaders, governing bodies, boards, elected representatives or statutory office holders.
- Experience leading complex policy development, legislative analysis and strategic reform initiatives.

Subject matter expertise

- Demonstrated understanding of First Peoples self-determination, rights and contemporary policy issues affecting First Peoples communities.
- Strong political acumen, judgement and capacity to navigate complexity and competing priorities

Cultural Capability

- Demonstrated understanding of the histories, cultures, rights and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Experience working respectfully and collaboratively with First Peoples communities, organisations and leadership structures, navigating complex accountability relationships and recognising the cultural authority of Traditional Owners.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Exceptional communication, relationship-building and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Demonstrated ability to engage sensitively with complex, contested and emotionally significant subject matter.
- Proven capacity to build effective working relationships across communities, representative structures, government and partner organisations.

Leadership and management

- Demonstrated leadership capability, including experience leading multidisciplinary teams and fostering a high performing and collaborative culture.

Communication skills

- Highly developed written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to prepare high-quality briefs, papers, policy advice and presentations for varied audiences.

Desirable

- Experience supporting Treaty, Indigenous rights, constitutional, governance or major reform processes.
- Knowledge of Victoria's First Peoples policy, legislative and governance environment.

Key capabilities

The Head of Policy will demonstrate:

- Commitment to First Peoples self-determination and community-led decision-making
- Strategic and systems thinking
- Political acumen and sound judgement
- Cultural capability and respect for First Peoples authority and knowledge systems
- Collaborative and influential leadership
- Integrity, accountability and professionalism
- Ability to navigate complexity, ambiguity and sensitive policy environments

Gellung Warl Values

Gellung Warl Values are those expressed in section 2 of the Statewide Treaty Act, 'Objects and Principles'.

Objects and Principles

(1) The objects of this Act are—

- a) to give effect to the first Statewide Treaty; and
- b) to provide foundations for ongoing Statewide Treaty-making between Gellung Warl and the State, including to negotiate further functions and powers of Gellung Warl over time; and

- c) to advance the inherent rights and self-determination of First Peoples; and
 - d) to address the unacceptable disadvantage inflicted on First Peoples by the historic wrongs and ongoing injustices of colonisation and ensure the equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by First Peoples.
- (2) This Act is underpinned by the following principles—
- a) Gellung Warl established under this Act has evolved from the critical successes of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria Ltd ACN 636 189 412 and now sits at the centre of the Treaty relationship; and
 - b) Gellung Warl has been designed by and for First Peoples based on broad engagement with First Peoples in Victoria and—
 - i. it is inclusive and representative of all First Peoples; and
 - ii. its structure of representation reflects Aboriginal Lore, Law and Cultural Authority and the responsibilities of Traditional Owners to Country and to all peoples who are on Country; and
 - c) Gellung Warl is an ongoing feature of the democratic and political fabric of Victoria; and
 - d) Statewide Treaty-making is an ongoing relationship in accordance with the Treaty Negotiation Framework and involves ongoing negotiations and agreement between the State and Gellung Warl; and
 - e) Statewide Treaty-making imposes mutual obligations on Gellung Warl and the State to create and uphold co-operative arrangements to ensure laws and practices in Victoria benefit and create a better future for all Victorians; and
 - f) ongoing Statewide Treaty-making includes the negotiation of the ongoing transfer of decision-making, rule-making, advisory and other powers and functions from the State government to Gellung Warl.